THAT THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM SHOULD BE STABILIZED AT FORTY MILLION—A DEBATE*

CHAIRMAN: **Sir CHARLES DARWIN, K.B.E., Sc.D., F.R.S.**

SPEAKERS: **C. P. BLACKER, M.A., M.D.; R. PILKINGTON, M.C., M.P.; Mrs. M. A. PYKE; P. R. COX, F.I.A., F.S.S.**

THE CHAIRMAN

TO-NIGHT we are to have a debate. The subject is " That the population of the United Kingdom should be stabilized at forty million." We are going to have four speakers: first, Dr. Blacker, for; then Captain Pilkington, against; then Mrs. Pyke, for; then Mr. Peter Cox, against. After that, the subject will be open to debate for anyone here present. We have to limit the time a certain amount. The first speakers will be talking for something like ten minutes each and I shall hope that, after that, nobody will force me to call him to order for speaking for more than, say, five minutes. I won't waste any more of your time, but will call on Dr. Blacker.

DR. C. P. BLACKER

I begin by thanking the two opposition speakers, Captain Pilkington and Mr. Cox, for their kindness in agreeing to take part in this debate. The debate was not entirely easy to arrange, and the fact that these two consented to take an opposite side to myself makes me the more grateful to them.

Ends should be separated from means. There is no difference, I feel, between the two sides this evening about ends. Both desire what is best for Britain and the Commonwealth. The difference is over the means by which this goal can be attained.

The motion proposes that the United Kingdom's population should be stabilized at forty million. In mid 1955, the population of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the United Kingdom) stood at a little over fifty-one million. What I advocate is a *Forty-three year Commonwealth plan* the object of which would be to enlarge to the maximum the contribution to the world's population made by the Commonwealth as a whole, while at the same time benefiting the United Kingdom. This plan, as I see it, calls for a programme designed at the same time to raise fertility in, and promote emigration from, the United Kingdom. The plan is a long-term plan the effect of which would be to stabilize the United Kingdom's population by the end of the twentieth century at about the figure attained at the beginning of that century. (In 1900 the United Kingdom's population stood at about thirty-eight million.) For forty years or so the loss through emigration should slightly exceed the gain through natural increases. But by the end of the century the two movements should balance one another. The more vigorous the two movements—the natural increase and the accompanying emigration—the better for the Commonwealth as a whole. Three arguments will be adduced in favour of such a Commonwealth plan—eugenic, economic and strategic.

The eugenic argument is the simplest but, from the *Society's* particular standpoint, the most important of the three. Its significance was brought home to me in the course of my visit to Japan in 1955. If, as in Japan, a country's population is felt by its inhabitants to be so large that further increases would weaken rather than strengthen it, would

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aggravate rather than solve difficulties, conscientious and patriotic people will feel that they can best help their country by refraining from having children. But improvident and morally insensitive people will suffer no such inhibitions. A differential fertility of dysgenic character will thus be encouraged. It is what people *feel* which is here important, not what economists pronounce. People's feelings in these matters are mercurial, being much influenced by suggestion. Witness the upsurge of would-be emigrants since the Suez crisis.

From the economic angle, two arguments can be advanced. The first is that a country which, like Britain and Japan, must import a large fraction of its food is in a highly vulnerable position. As we have been repeatedly told, Britain, like Japan, must export or starve. But the capacity to export and sell depends on numerous events over which the would-be exporting country has little control. Tariffs could be erected or even embargoes imposed; markets could be lost to foreign competition; and raw materials (such as tobacco or cotton which are imported, processed and exported as goods) may fluctuate in price. This country imports about a third of its food. By the end of the century agricultural techniques will probably have advanced to the point that the United Kingdom could, under the spur of necessity, support a population of forty million on home-grown food. The dietary may not be Lucullan, but the dire threat of starvation will have been lifted. The second economic argument relates to automation. I believe that the world may well now be poised on the brink of a second industrial revolution one of whose many effects will be to make much unskilled labour redundant. But this is an immense subject which could be usefully debated at one of the *Society's* evening meetings. Suffice it that the adoption and spread of automation could simultaneously facilitate the numerical reduction of a population and the raising of that population's living standards.

Many economists see grave difficulties arising from a decline in numbers. But not all are irreconcilably pessimistic. Exactly twenty years ago—in 1937, that is before automation had begun to make its impact—Lord Keynes delivered to our *Society* a Galton Lecture entitled "Some Economic Consequences of a Declining Population." He ended with these words:

> A stationary or a slowly declining population may, if we exercise the necessary strength and wisdom, enable us to raise the standard of life to what it should be whilst retaining those parts of our traditional scheme of life which we value the more now that we see what happens to those who lose them.

The third argument, the strategic, I find the most difficult. The need for dispersal was stressed in the most emphatic terms by military authorities ten years ago. But the extent of a dispersal which would reduce the dire effects of the since-developed megaton bomb (a bomber can now be at least two million times as effective as it was twelve years ago) might be held to weaken the argument. The most recent Government statement (April 1957: Cmd. 124) boldly declared that:

> It must be frankly recognized that at present there is no means of providing adequate protection for the people of this country against the consequences of an attack with nuclear weapons.

But megaton bombs and inter-continental ballistic missiles apart, the events of the second great war and of the ensuing smaller wars have shown that large populations are not necessarily military boons. With his tanks, Hitler, in a few hours, rounded up the big Belgian and Dutch cities on the plains of north-west Europe; but he was held up by a scanty but scattered enemy ensconced in the Norwegian highlands. A small and dispersed population subsisting in mountainous regions is to-day the most difficult to subdue. We can recall the difficulties of the war in the Korean mountains and in the mountains of Greece's northern frontiers; also how, in 1945, Hitler planned a retreat into the Bavarian and Austrian Alps.

How does the megaton bomb and the inter-continental rocket with a nuclear warhead affect the need for decentralization? This at least can be said: the more the inhabitants of our huge conurbations can be dispersed throughout a distant and at present

sparsely populated Commonwealth, the less unimaginable will be the holocaust brought about by an all-out nuclear war.

I will now turn to how the proposed forty-three year plan could be put into effect. I repeat that I would encourage a natural increase of the United Kingdom's population provided that the increase will, during the period of the plan, be slightly exceeded by emigration. Emigration is a two-way process involving close co-ordination between the mother country and the receiving country. The mother country would be seriously weakened and its age-structure impaired if efforts are not made to secure a balanced or (in respect of age) a cross-sectional emigration. There are obvious difficulties from the standpoint of the receiving countries about taking in middle-aged and old people; but this country's position is now better appreciated by countries with immigration quotas such as Australia and Canada (which has imposed quotas as recently as July 1957) both of which prefer British to foreign immigrants. The importance of Commonwealth migration was attested in January this year by a full debate in the House of Commons on the Empire Settlement Bill. The speech by Mr. C. J. M. Alport, Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, showed a lively appreciation of the need for cross-sectional schemes and his views were endorsed by other speakers.

It will be remembered that the Royal Commission on Population was concerned with the Commonwealth's population problems. They were at pains to point out that the aggregate population of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa amounted, in 1947, to *less than half* that of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the United Kingdom).

The Commissioners declared (para. 332):

> We have no doubt that it is in the long term interests of Great Britain and the Commonwealth as a whole to maintain the flow of emigrants from Great Britain to the other parts of the Commonwealth at as high a level as possible.

But I hasten to say that the Royal Commission was "definitely on the side of avoiding a decline in numbers," though they added what seems to me the important proviso "except conceivably as an incident of a large scheme of Empire migration."

The rates of natural increase in the sparsely populated countries of the Commonwealth are higher than in the densely populated United Kingdom. A newly married couple emigrating to (say) Canada or Australia will be likely to have more children there than here. By encouraging emigration, you therefore raise the Commonwealth's total contribution to the population of the world. If, on the other hand, a sense of pressure and confinement becomes widespread in Britain (of which there are signs to-day) as it has done in Japan, birth rates could drop till there is no natural increase. Instead of the fountain flowing freely, back-pressure could develop; the fountain could choke and the flow cease.

Finally, two points require to be stressed. No policy aiming at slowly reducing numbers to an agreed lower level could succeed unless some restriction were imposed on the counterbalancing movement of immigration.

Our official spokesmen seemingly lack the courage to declare that an immigration quota might sometime have to be imposed by the United Kingdom. Most of the world's receiving countries (including the United States of America) have such quotas. Many countries further require that immigrants should satisfy certain medical and hygienic requirements. Why should we not do the same?

My second point is the need to define what is regarded as *desirable* without being unduly inhibited by regard for what might at the moment be deemed *possible*. What seems impossible to-day could become possible to-morrow—as we learned in the last war. Once you make up your mind on what you want, you may later come to see that where there is a will there is a way.

CAPTAIN R. A. PILKINGTON

May I say first of all what a very great honour I feel it is to be asked to address this meeting; the thanks are for me to give, and not for Dr. Blacker to give to me.

We have listened to an extremely powerful

presentation of the thesis argued by Dr. Blacker, and I think that many of the things that he said will find general agreement among everybody. He has given us very good reasons for his argument; but—" good reasons must perforce give place to better " !

He mentioned three main subjects upon which he rested his argument, and I shall come to them in a moment, when I get a little farther on in my speech. I want to begin, as he did, by taking one or two general assumptions upon which I think there will be general agreement.

First of all, I think there will be general agreement upon this: that the population of the whole world is rising at a really alarming rate and that sooner or later it is bound to call into being one of three things (or perhaps a combination of two or all of those three things), war, starvation or a substantial extension of birth control.

The second thing on which I think there will be common agreement is that this increase in the world's population is happening mostly among the less civilized peoples.

And the third common assumption is that our Western civilization, our Western Europe, has pulled into one vast technological civilization the whole of the rest of the world, with the result that whatever happens in any part of the world is magnified in its effects while its repercussions will be felt round the whole planet, whether the thing that happens is good or bad. That means that in this century in which we are living there are greater dangers than there have ever been before, but there are also greater opportunities than there have ever been before.

My fourth point upon which I think there is common agreement is that in this sort of situation the importance of leadership, whether it is of individuals or whether it is of nations, is greater than it has ever been before.

Now, as we survey the world to-day, there are, of course, the two colossi of the United States and the Soviet Union, tremendous in material power and influence; but there is also this country, which has an immensely longer and wider experience in the whole realm of politics, understood in the broadest sense, whether it be national or international, whether it be imperial or colonial, or whether it be now " Commonwealthian " (if one can use that adjective). We do not seek to rival in size or wealth or material power those two great colossi, but we do seek for ourselves power, wealth and influence, both for domestic reasons and for world reasons, and, in the pursuit of these things, the optimum population is a very important factor.

If that, then, is the general framework of the position, and if the rôle which this country has got to play is so vital, as I believe that it is, my argument this evening is that we can fulfil that rôle better with fifty million than we can with forty million, and I have chosen some half-dozen considerations to lay before you to substantiate, as I see it, that argument, and my colleague, Mr. Cox, is going to add some of his own.

First, I would like to come straightaway to the first of the reasons which Dr. Blacker himself put forward: he referred to the strategic consideration. I agree that that is an important one. He sees it as more important than it was ten years ago. I see it as less important than it was ten years ago. What he wants us to do is to transfer some of our eggs to another basket; but, if the catastrophe comes, all the baskets, it seems to me, are going to (if I may mix my metaphors) get it in the neck and what we have to do is to see that the catastrophe does not occur, and it is to that end that I think we should devote our attention.

Dr. Blacker's second consideration was the economic one. It is one I know that is often argued—that we cannot support ourselves in this island without exporting a great deal, and that that is a bad thing. Well now, with great respect to him, I am exactly opposed to that argument, because I believe that if the need to export was removed from this country our nation would lose a stimulus, and the loss of that stimulus would not help to keep this nation the robust and adventuring sort of nation which it has been and is at the present time.

I turn to another of the considerations

which I am laying before you during the time at my disposal—the population density of this country. It is very great; but ours is by no means the most densely populated country in the world, as we sometimes think when we see the various conglomerations of population in this island. Japan, which was mentioned by Dr. Blacker, is more densely populated; so is Holland; so is Belgium; and there are other island examples, sometimes going up to three and four times the rate of density which we have in this island. Again, from the amenity point of view, of course we do not want to see our countryside progressively despoiled as we have in past years, but we are now within measurable distance of having the accommodation which we need for our population, and I would quote a gentleman with whom I am not often in agreement, but perhaps for that reason what he says has the more weight in this context—Mr. Bevan. He said, in 1953, four years ago, " Taking the country as a whole, we are not very far removed from having the total amount of accommodation which the country requires." And since then, of course, a lot more accommodation has been provided.

These, you may say, are more or less neutral aspects of the problem. I come to a more positive consideration, and this meets, or I hope will meet, the eugenic argument, at any rate in part, which Dr. Blacker propounded to us. I maintain that a decrease would be positively undesirable in this country because it could only be brought about by one of two ways; either by an extension of birth control or by an extension of emigration, both of which Dr. Blacker mentioned. It seems to me that if you extend birth control you are bound to extend it to that more intelligent section of the community where you do not want it to apply, and you will not have it applied to anything like the same extent to the less intelligent part of the population in which, if you were going to have restriction, you would like to see restriction. So far as emigration is concerned, Dr. Blacker faced many of the problems which there are there. However much people may make speeches in the House of Commons and elsewhere (as he mentioned) and say that it is desirable to have a balanced slice of your population removed, the fact remains that it is going to be extremely difficult to get a balanced section of your population emigrating. The older people among the community will always tend to want to stay in this country, and will not, of course, be so welcome in the countries to which it might be hoped that they would go.

And that brings me to the next consideration, which I think is a very important one. It is at the present time of importance to this country that we do keep a very substantial proportion of young people, because, thanks to the decline in the birth-rate from War I to War II, the number of older people in our community is already greater than it has ever been in the past, and it is going to get progressively greater over the rest of this century, and we shall need all the young people coming along if we are going to maintain our standard of living and support this much larger older section of the community. That is a problem which is going to be with all the governments of this country for the next fifty years or so.

My next consideration is this: that we are already far behind the other units of the Anglo-American world, the English-speaking peoples, in the natural increase which is taking place in the various countries which make up that world. I think the figures are startling. The rate of increase in Canada is 19 per thousand, in New Zealand it is 16, in South Africa it is 16, in Australia it is 13, in the United States it is 13, and in this country it is only 4. Now, if this motion were to be passed, and if it were to become the policy of the country, it would mean that every other English-speaking unit throughout the world would be increasing and we alone would be dwindling, which I submit would not be a good thing.

And that brings me to my final consideration, perhaps the most important of all. Rightly or wrongly, in the world to-day it is regarded as a sign of weakness and feebleness if the population of a country is dwindling. We may say that that is not sensible, but it is a fact, and we have to face

facts as they are. Thanks to the effects of two wars, we are in a sufficiently precarious position as it is. The dangers that beset us are obvious and great. I said earlier that they beset the whole world; they do, but not least this country. Yet if there are dangers there are also great opportunities, and not least for us in the position in which we are, within the three circles: the European circle, the Atlantic circle, the Commonwealth circle. And to seize and make the best of those great opportunities which our position and the quality of our people gives to us, we need not only the wisdom and experience which we have accumulated, but also strength, all the strength that we can get; and my argument is that a dwindling population would be a sign not of strength but of weakness. We recognize that there are some small communities which live happy and contented lives; one may perhaps quote Scandinavia. But those nations are on the sidelines of the world at the present time. Once they were great protagonists, but no longer. We are. We are on the field of play, or the field of battle, whichever way it may be, and we need all the strength that we can get.

I am sure that this *Society*, whose aim is the betterment of the race, should not at the same time aim at the dwindling of the nation. I believe that we can best fulfil our destiny by improving our population of fifty million, yes, but also by maintaining it.

MRS. MARGARET PYKE

I think that questions like population pressure and stabilization of population sound rather academic to some of us, and I should like to bring them down into terms of the average human being.

In the first place, he is probably a citizen, because I think about 86 per cent of our population lives in towns. In spite of what Captain Pilkington has just said about accommodation now nearly meeting the needs of our population, I should not think that the average citizen would agree with him. The average citizen usually wakes up in a house or flat which he thinks too small, and his neighbours far too close, because there are too many people chasing too few houses. To go to work, he probably has to queue for a bus or train, and, if he spends ten minutes doing that going out and again coming home he wastes eighty-three forty-hour weeks during forty years. That is more than a year and a half of his working life, wasted standing in bus and train queues. I read in *The Times* the other day that in an hotel of 100 rooms with 300 days' occupancy, a reduction of ten minutes in the time needed for the chambermaid to perform her duties in a room saves £875 a year. So quite a lot of money would be saved by avoiding the bus queues.

Then he goes to his factory or office, which is probably also short of space or short of air, and he has to scramble through his lunch after again waiting in a queue.

Meanwhile his wife has been struggling in a shopping queue, and his children going to schools, where they obtain education—or more likely evade it—in overcrowded classes. As for the universities, I don't know how many try to get in for each place available, but I did read the other day that the dean of one of our medical schools said that he had eight applicants for every vacancy.

If our citizen's wife wishes to go into a maternity home, she has to book her bed nine months—or, if possible, more !—beforehand. If any of the family are ill, they have to get into a queue for the doctor or dentist, or wait in the out-patients' department; unless an operation is urgent, they are likely to die before they get it. When they die, they are still overcrowded, because there is not room for enough cemeteries. In fact, I think that what Mr. Piddington has said in his really brilliant book, *The Limits of Mankind*, is true: Britain is the first country in history to run out of space.

We have fifty million people here on fifty-six million acres; I agree with Captain Pilkington that we are not actually the most over-crowded country per acre, but most of the overcrowding elsewhere is in countries not so mobile as we are; generally, their populations do not yet go out in motor cars or play golf, or go to the seaside, or fly. In some cases their land is more inhabitable and fertile than ours; in fact, owing to the

combination of population density and the stage of our development, we are the first to feel this spatial pinch.

Years ago, Mr. Piddington published a calculation to show that if every family in England possessed a beach hut six feet wide, there would be a continuous terrace of huts, stretching four deep, right round the coast from Berwick to Solway Firth. In fact, there just is not enough room in this country, and we see the results in the constant struggles to find space for schools, hospitals, houses, roads, reservoirs, airfields and open spaces, struggles which frequently lead to eviction, compulsory purchase, and quarrels between rival authorities and Government departments.

Now this is also an expensive business. Traffic delays are not only irritating, indeed infuriating, but they are also enormously expensive. In London traffic moves at an average speed of eleven miles per hour, a shade better than in New York, where the Traffic Safety Committee has estimated that the cost of road congestion is 1,080 million dollars a year. And, of course, overcrowded roads mean accidents, and accidents are not only personal tragedies, they are highly expensive.

Overcrowded houses lead to broken homes and juvenile delinquency, and then we have to spend money on probation officers and magistrates and prisons and police.

But apart from all these material questions, our personal happiness is seriously affected. Our cities are rapidly spreading like a blight and running over into all the little available space left of our lovely countryside. I suppose all my generation know what it is to go back to the remote and peaceful village of our childhood and find it just a red-brick villa outpost of the nearest city; all the lovers' lanes and trees have gone, and there is nothing but houses and shops, and a factory or two. And when we go now to our favourite river pool or seaside beach we find it raucous with radios, littered with newspapers and orange peel and paper bags, and haunted by the sellers and consumers of choc-ice and ice-lollies; and as for bathing—you have a choice between bathing in a river boiling with factory effluent or in the sea where our own human sewage is inexorably returning to us.

As Dr. Blacker said, it is not for us to say *how* our population should be reduced, we want to find out if this is a good thing or not; but (again to quote Mr. Piddington) "some carefully reasoned schemes have envisaged a possible flow of emigration of one million persons annually for twenty-five years and it is probable that the highly developed transport facilities and technical skill of the British people could just achieve the task." The resolution before you would not require anything nearly as rapid as that, of course.

As regards birth control, Captain Pilkington said, that would be harmful because the intelligent would apply it most. But that is already happening. I doubt if a reduction in the birth rate will be necessary, but if it were, I was much taken, myself, with a suggestion I read in an American article the other day, that young couples should be given a cash present of several hundred dollars for every childless year. That would be far less expensive than the children themselves are, and it would be a greater inducement to those possibly less well-designed for parenthood to practise birth control than the exhortations and persuasions which we try at present.

One point I would mention which Captain Pilkington made: he said he was not quite sure if a dwindling population (that word has an unfortunate connotation, shall we say a reduced population) was a good thing. Perhaps it is something on which we can give the world a lead and show that it *is* a very good thing. But in any case remedies can only come after the diagnosis, and what I am asking you to accept is the diagnosis that our population pressure is dangerously high and ought to be reduced and kept stable at 20 per cent lower than it is at present.

MR. P. R. COX

I should like to start by thanking Dr. Blacker very much for his kind remarks; if I may say so, however, he has created something of an impression that really

Captain Pilkington and I agree with him but that we have arranged to support the contrary view just for the sake of the debate! That is not so. I do not agree with the motion. Even if I accepted the principle, I still would not accept the way in which it is worded. In one way it gives me great regret to speak against the arguments of Dr. Blacker and Mrs. Pyke, as they are both very much identified with societies that we all greatly admire; but I think that the aims we have in common can be achieved by means other than those we are discussing to-night.

The motion says that our own total population ought to be stabilized. In the technical language of demography, a "stable" population is not one with a fixed total. It is one with a constant age-distribution, constant mortality and constant fertility. It takes a hundred years of constant mortality and fertility—and, incidentally, a net migratory movement of nil—to get such a population. We have never had one and are never likely to see one. One with a fixed total as well is even more unlikely.

Previous speakers have referred to the desirability of this motion as opposed to the practicality of it. For myself, I do not see much use in discussing something that might be done unless we have a good idea how to do it; and we have little notion of how to bring about a reduction by over ten million persons in order to reach a stable population of forty million. It is a good thing for a country to have a population policy; but it must be a realistic one. Recent history provides a number of examples of governments that have tried to make changes in their populations and have not succeeded. The first example that comes to mind is that of Hitler, who in the middle nineteen-thirties attempted to encourage a growth in fertility. At the time his success seemed quite impressive, but subsequent studies have shown that there was little in his population policy which contributed to the observed increase in fertility; such increase as occurred was almost certainly the effect of economic recovery from the years of depression that had preceded his rise to power.

Again, in France after 1945, the population had been depleted by two world wars, especially among men of working age. In Italy, however, there was surplus of manpower and plenty of unemployment. What could apparently be easier than to encourage large numbers of Italians to emigrate to France? The French demographic journals were full of plans for doing so, but in the end relatively little movement occurred. The fact is that people's traditions, beliefs and habits cannot be changed overnight, but only over a long period. As Lord Simon said in his book on Barbados, the inhabitants know perfectly well that the island is overpopulated, but even so they seem to do very little about it, presumably because their habits are fixed in certain channels.

Let us suppose, however, for the sake of argument, that we knew how to control population. Speakers to-night have recognized that this would be a slow process, extending over many decades. Supposing we decided that we wanted only forty million people and decided to reduce to that number in forty years' time; who can say that we shall view things in the same way, and desire the same goal, in ten years' time, let alone twenty, thirty or forty years hence? By the time the target was nearly reached, we should in all probability be aiming at something quite different. It is very difficult to plan forty years ahead in this age, or to know what the economic and political situation will be so far off.

I come now to the core of my objection to this motion. Nobody knows yet how bad it would be from an economic and political point of view for us to have a population that is not increasing. One can only infer from two of our near neighbours, France and Eire, which have been nearer than any others to having a constant population, what their people feel about such a situation. In France, strenuous efforts have been made for over a quarter of a century to stimulate the birth rate. In Eire a Population Commission a few years ago deplored the fact that so many people were emigrating; it would not admit—perhaps for reasons of national prestige—that the more energetic and

enthusiastic people were going abroad, and leaving the less progressive and active behind; all the same, something of that sort may well have been going on. The Commission also regretted the fact that Irish people marry so late, and therefore cannot have large families. In other words, the Irish would like to encourage an increase in population; they do not feel that their country is being sufficiently developed at present.

Not only is an unvarying population a disadvantage, but also strong arguments have been advanced recently in favour of a moderate population growth such as we have in Great Britain at the present time. For instance, the Overseas Migration Board recommended in its first report, which was issued in 1954, that there should be an increase in population large enough to ensure a suitable supply of emigrants to the Commonwealth. It is up to us to provide economic help as well as manpower to members of the Commonwealth, and we should not be in a position to do that from a position of weakness. A position of strength, such as only increasing numbers can provide, is essential.

One of my first reactions on seeing the motion was that there must be a misprint in the wording: surely forty million ought at least to be fifty million? Possibly we could manage to stabilize at fifty million or more, but how indeed could we stabilize at more than ten million fewer than at present? I see now that forty million was really intended. It is still a very large number—quite big enough to be seriously embarrassing in the event of a hydrogen bomb being dropped here; in such a case it would not make much difference in the general result whether we had forty million or fifty million. With forty million probably in the normal course we should still have to import goods from overseas on a large scale. But the difference of ten million is also a large number. Presumably it is not the idea to wait until all those people have died in the natural course. How then are we going to dispose of them? You have read in your papers lately about voyages to the moon, or to platforms in space. Such possibilities are, however, outside the scope of to-night's debate. Ordinary emigration would be the only hope of disposing of a large section of our population, but would so many people *want* to go overseas? That is a question that has not yet been asked to-night: it seems very doubtful whether so large a number would be willing to leave. If they did, would the Commonwealth want to have them? Opportunities in Australia and Canada are mainly for the most healthy and active men and women. The already heavy burden of the aged in the United Kingdom would be increased if we exported a higher proportion of our young people than at present.

The demographic position to-day in this country is less unfavourable than is often realized. We are free from the great population pressure that is being experienced in South-East Asia and elsewhere, and yet we have not reached the comparative uniformity of total numbers from year to year that has been experienced in France and Eire. If we were to interfere with this fairly happy situation the consequences might well be unfavourable.

It has been argued to-night that a gain from the point of view of eugenics would follow from the successful pursuance of the policy expressed in the motion. I would not dispute that in itself, although I have argued that any gains might be more than offset in other ways. But the aims of eugenics can be pursued by means other than creating an artificial decrease in the population.

THE CHAIRMAN

We have had the four speakers introducing the subject. I would now ask if any member would like to make a few remarks.

MR. C. G. TOMLINSON

Mr. Peter Cox asked whether the population had been asked what they thought about emigrating. I submit, Sir, that the Planners would say: " If they don't like to go, they must be made to go." I do submit that we are suffering from too much planning in this country, and what we need to do is

to find a way of getting rid of some of the plans, and perhaps some of the Planners, and then we should have a happier country.

MR. R. A. PIDDINGTON

As a newcomer here, I do not expect there is any keen speculation as to which side I am on. May I stimulate it by quoting a quatrain:

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

To which a twentieth-century hand has added:

> But how much more unfortunate are those
> Whose wealth declines and population grows.

I will now confess that the last line expresses to my mind what has happened to this country during at least the last forty-three years in particular. Still, I do recognize that in the future our problem with regard to population may not be so economic as I may have implied. I can envisage that, if science makes the progress during the next ten years which many people expect and which a few people dread, we may find that our standard of living in Britain rises materially; and yet I submit that, as a result of that, it will fall culturally.

To explain that paradox, I may perhaps draw your attention to a picture we have already had put before us to-night of the congestion of this country, particularly as regards road traffic. The average motorist, inching his way back from a weekend at the seaside, has certainly achieved what is called maximum economic welfare; he not only has his car, he has plenty to eat, he is well dressed; yet he cannot be said to be happy, in fact occasionally he feels absolutely mutinous. What is wrong? I think increased economic welfare has led to increased individual frustration. And this frustration, I believe, is accumulating in this country at the present time.

It is a very serious situation because at any moment it may suddenly spread like Asian influenza, and people may think of throwing in their hand. I notice, for instance, a general reluctance among people even to build a house, or buy a property or to settle anywhere, because they say: " In a country like this, where space is so short, the moment I select a certain site, somebody else will come along and oust me from it, or else a factory will be built alongside the house I have put up and my position will be rendered impossible."

So I suggest that, if we increase our population instead of reducing it, that situation would be very much worsened. May I put it as a kind of parable? If you have twenty diners round a table which can accommodate twenty and no more, the addition of one diner will not create one skeleton at the feast but twenty-one dissatisfied diners who would gladly forgo the rest of the meal. If in this country people feel they are in that position, that life has become insupportable culturally, we may, as a community, suddenly find we are no longer viable, because there is no interest for anyone in the day's work.

It has been suggested that we might remedy this evil by emigration. We British have a long tradition of emigration; we know that it can be done, and has been done successfully in the past—in fact I shudder to think what the situation would now be like in this country if we had never had the outlet of emigration. England, I can imagine, would be one vast Birmingham, or Blackburn. And I fear that still may happen unless the resolution which is before us to-night is accepted, not only by us but, in the end, by public opinion in the United Kingdom.

MR. N. S. PERCIVAL

My sympathies are with Dr. Blacker and Mrs. Pyke, but the difficulty is, as some speakers have said, in putting their proposal into practice. There are two methods: emigration; birth control. Emigration certainly, if continued in its present form, will result in the younger people leaving the country, and birth control in the more desirable members of the population reducing their numbers. The same question comes with immigration; the reason we are willing to take all these people from the West Indies is that they are young people and they are needed to do the jobs in this country.

For those reasons, I think there is very

great difficulty in this scheme for reducing the population, although I have great sympathy with it.

MR. E. AGIUS

There is real difficulty in dealing with this subject in the time at our disposal. It is so easy to go wrong in logic and to make false deductions and to omit things. I cannot attempt to deal with it in five minutes, so I will only make one contribution to this debate—a quotation from a speech by Lord Samuel in the House of Lords. He said: " When you stand alarmed at the idea that a new mouth has been born into this world, do not forget that there has also been born a new life and a new pair of hands."

THE CHAIRMAN

At this point, I will put my own views before you—rather scrappily.

There was a reference to the whole of England becoming like Blackburn; Mrs. Pyke, on the other hand, was objecting to the whole of England becoming like Blackpool. I don't know which is the worse.

Secondly, Dr. Blacker was the only person who spoke about restricting immigration into this country. Whatever way the debate goes to-night, I hope we can reach some kind of unanimity on that subject. I feel, when all other countries are restricting immigration, it is folly for us not to do the same. That is nothing to do with more or less population, but sheer protection for this country, which the United States and most other countries already have in force.

Another point referred to is this question of birth control invariably affecting the superior portions of the population. It seems natural to us that it should, and I suspect that it very often does, but there is a very interesting and important example to the contrary. As you know, ten years ago there was a doctrine held by most people who thought about the population question that prosperity led to a reduced increase in population, and the inference was that if we could make the whole world prosperous, we should make a nice, jolly family together, having no children, and enjoying ourselves. That has been proved absolutely wrong by one most important example which has emerged in the course of the last five or six years—the United States of America. The United States of America at present is increasing its population at the rate of one of the four or five fastest countries in the world, and, in view of its size, that means making a most important contribution. That increase is not amongst the downtrodden; there is a positive correlation between a man's income and the number of children he has. I won't say that if he is a millionaire he gets a million children, but at the present time there is a positive correlation of that kind. So I don't think you need take too seriously what, for most of us, seems instinctively a rather obvious danger.

The main point with which I am impressed in this argument is the question of spreading the business over forty years. Mr. Cox made the point that we might change our minds, but there is one thing which I think we can forecast with most certainty in the whole future of the world—that is that it is practically certain, short of collision with another solar system or a good, effective atom bomb, that the population of the world will be doubled, or very nearly doubled, by the year 2,000. Anyway, ten years after that it will certainly be double what it is now. Therefore, if you are stabilizing at forty or fifty million, you are going to make this country half as important in the whole world as it is at present. I happen to share the view that we cannot control it, that the possibility of control is " out "; but if it is " in," if we do control it, we are writing ourselves down to something like half the present importance we have in the world.

Finally, I would like to touch on a point that I am really rather distressed that everybody seemed to think so important—the standard of living. I don't think anyone has really tried to define what standard of living is a tolerable standard, but I have the advantage of *knowing*: when anyone speaks of a tolerable standard of living he means something which is a little better than what he had this year! There is no other answer.

DR. G. C. L. BERTRAM

I only have a few remarks. I leave aside things like whether the wording of the motion is good or not; but it is quite clear what is aimed at—whether it is desirable, whether it is possible; and it is clearly a matter on which there is great divergence of opinion. It is something weighed in the balance and it is not quite obvious whether it is heavy on one side or the other; we all make our personal integrations.

I cannot agree with Mr. Cox at all. His argument was really: "If you cannot be accurately prophetic, do nothing." It seems to me if you feel that, the best thing is to take some hashish and settle down and be happy. If we cannot be accurately prophetic, still, we have minds, and we can attempt to be prophetic about the availability of food in the next forty years. My own view is that it will become progressively more difficult for this country to import food over the next forty years, when the rest of the world is going to have these immense population increases.

Captain Pilkington introduced an argument which has great importance—the strength of the Commonwealth. Is the strength of the Commonwealth, which we all want to see at a maximum, at its greatest with people spread or with them concentrated? We must make up our minds on that.

But we are not aiming at the strength of one nation, or of the Commonwealth; what we are aiming at is, presumably, the health and happiness and so on of the individual. So, when we are thinking of strength, we have, I feel, to look through the present, which is an unhappy and unsatisfactory stage in the world's history, and look forward to a period when we can get closer to our ultimate aim, the health and happiness of the individual. And if one takes that into one's mind, it does seem to me that somehow, as Mrs. Pyke has suggested, we have to have a lower number (though I must remind you that there are bus queues in Sydney, too!).

It is a difficult integration; one has to make it; and I would come down on the side of Dr. Blacker and Mrs. Pyke.

MR. CHARLES S. GREEN

I cannot claim to be on either side, and I have been wondering, as I listened, wouldn't it be rather a miracle if the first aim enunciated by Dr. Blacker in his thesis were realized—the clarification of the mind, the collective mind, of the Council of this *Society* on this question? In saying this I am reflecting, not upon any prejudices in the minds of Council members: but upon the difficulty and complexity of the present problem.

I have been somewhat irritated by the constant references to emigration, without any sort of analysis of what emigration is, or should be, from the standpoint of this motion. Mr. Piddington made some enthusiastic remarks about the nature of emigration in the past and present as an outlet, but has anybody, since the days of, say, Botany Bay, even considered the possibility of making serious representations to any of the dominions or colonies that they should, in fact, receive a cross-section of our population? A true cross-section of our people would include, would it not, in addition to some of the strongest and the best physically, intellectually and morally, a percentage of the aged, the sick, of the handicapped in mind or in body, a number of known cases of tuberculosis and of cancer, a few criminals and some delinquents, with a sprinkling of maladjusted scholars and young workers.

And, since we are speaking of emigration, and not of compulsory transportation, the complete willingness and desire of each individual concerned must, of course, be assumed. In fact, just ask yourselves, what would actually be a cross-section of our population, and what sort of inducement would be necessary to persuade Australia, or New Zealand, or Canada, or even one of the colonies, who are, perhaps, a little more amenable to inducement than the dominions, to take such a cross-section. But, on the other hand, fantastic as the idea seems, should we not seriously suggest to them that that should be the case? I hazard the guess that in the long run any dominion or colony willing to accept, from time to time, as immigrants, such a cross-section of our population, would benefit as greatly by so

doing as would the mother country in being relieved of its surplus. Otherwise our position at home, from the point of view of improvement through emigration, is just as fantastically impossible as speakers seem to agree would be the case if improvement were attempted by larger measures of birth control, resulting in what we can only call the wrong section of the population doing the controlling.

I do not think some of our speakers have been quite basic enough in their considerations, and I adduce this one matter of emigration as one which should be looked into further.

DR. J. P. M. TIZARD

May I say a few words about emigration and about immigration. It is surely not necessary that we should ask any of the Dominions or Colonies to take a cross-section of the population. The position is simply that, if they really want British immigrants, as apparently they do, they should pay for them—pay for that proportion of the old people and the infirm and the criminal whom the young emigrants were supporting in this country. At least this is a proposition which could be put to the Dominions, rather than asking them to take over unwilling sections of our population.

As regards immigration, if we really are the last country in the world to have any immigration policy, I think—and here I know I am against the sentiment of this meeting—that this is something to be gloried in; that it is a part of our respect for individual liberty and is deeply a part of the tradition of this country. If there is any strength left in the British Empire, it must lie in the free interchange of peoples between one part and another. If it is the fact that this is not the case in other parts of the Empire that is to be deplored, rather than the fact that we still permit free immigration here.

When we speak of immigration to this country at the moment, nearly everyone thinks of the Jamaican population. I do not think we need fear a deterioration in this country from mixtures of races. After all, our strength is supposed to originate from our mongrel ancestry and in the long run the population of this country may well be strengthened by the admission of a different race.

THE CHAIRMAN

If no one else wants to speak, I will ask Dr. Blacker to reply.

DR. C. P. BLACKER

Thank you, Mr. President. I really have nothing more to add, beyond, perhaps, that, having fully appreciated how incompatible are my views with those of Mr. Cox, I am the more grateful to him for having come here and spoken as he has done, and also to my old friend Captain Pilkington. We should all be grateful to them for having put their case so well.

The essential problem, as I see it, is a Commonwealth problem of a redistribution of population, which must be effected voluntarily, through understanding and co-operation between the receiving and sending countries. Anyone who reads the reports of the Overseas Migration Board can see how much thought is being given to such co-operation, and I see no reason why this co-operation should not increase and a greater measure of agreement be reached in the future than in the past. Manifestly, one cannot compel people to migrate if they do not wish to; but there is evidence that just now many people wish to emigrate. Such a movement can be aided by governmental action—either by credits (much discussed in the House of Commons), or by part-payment of their passage; also by making arrangements at the receiving end (which Australia and New Zealand have done) for their induction into the new life. Most of the Commonwealth's receiving countries are anxious to increase their quota of British immigrants. They have expressed themselves with much explicitness on this subject. There should be no basic difficulty in achieving accommodation if, on both sides, the necessary goodwill exists.

THE CHAIRMAN

It remains for us to give our warmest thanks to the four introducing speakers, and also to all the other speakers who have made a number of extremely interesting contributions to this debate. Thank you.